

yogurt, has an improved gel strength and/or an improved serum viscosity compared to a fermented milk product, preferably yogurt, that has not been produced by the process of the first aspect of the invention and/or does not comprise one of the compositions as defined hereinbefore.

**[0069]** In a preferred embodiment, the fermented milk product, preferably yogurt, obtainable by the process of the first aspect of the invention comprises less than 12%, less than 11%, less than 10%, less than 9.5%, less than 9.0%, less than 8.5%, less than 8.0%, less than 7.5%, less than 7.0%, less than 6.5%, less than 6.0%, less than 5.5%, less than 5.0%, less than 4.9%, less than 4.8%, less than 4.7%, less than 4.6%, less than 4.5%, less than 4.4%, less than 4.3%, less than 4.2%, less than 4.1%, less than 4.0%, less than 3.9%, less than 3.8%, less than 3.7%, less than 3.6%, less than 3.5%, less than 3.4%, less than 3.3%, less than 3.2%, less than 3.1% or less than 3.0% protein content.

**[0070]** In a further preferred embodiment, the present fermented milk product, preferably yogurt, obtainable by the process of the first aspect of the invention comprises a reduced protein content if compared with a fermented milk product, preferably yogurt that has not been produced by the process of the first aspect of the invention and/or does not comprise one of the compositions as defined hereinbefore. Preferably the reduced protein content is a reduction of at least 5%, preferably at least 10%, more preferably at least 15%, most preferably at least 20%.

**[0071]** It is found by the present inventors that the above protein contents, or reduced protein content, is combined with a gel strength and/or serum viscosity which is maintained, or not reduced, if compared with a fermented milk product, preferably yogurt, wherein the protein content, or reduced protein content, has not been reduced.

**[0072]** In a third aspect, the invention provides the use of any of one of the compositions as defined hereinbefore, preferably composition 1 or composition 2 or composition 3 or composition 4 or composition 5 or composition 6 or composition 7 or composition 8 or composition 9 or composition 10 or composition 11 or composition 12 or composition 13 or composition 14 or composition 15 or composition 16 or composition 17 or composition 18 or composition 19 or composition 20 or composition 21 or composition 22 or composition 23 or composition 24 or composition 25 or composition 26 or composition 27 or composition 28 or composition 29 or composition 30 or composition 31 or composition 32 or composition 33 or composition 34 or composition 35 or composition 36 or composition 37 for the production of the fermented milk product, preferably yogurt as defined in any of claims 22, having an improved gel strength and/or an improved serum viscosity compared to a fermented milk product, preferably yogurt, that has not been produced by such a composition.

**[0073]** In a preferred embodiment, the present invention relates to the use of any of the compositions 1 to 37, such as composition 17 or 24, for the production of a fermented milk product, preferably yogurt, wherein the time to reach pH 4.6 is reduced compared to a fermented milk product, preferably yogurt, that has not been produced by any of the composition 1 to 37 such as composition 17 or 24.

**[0074]** In a further preferred embodiment, the present invention relates to the use of any of the compositions 1 to 37, such as composition 17 or 24, for the production of a fermented milk product, preferably yogurt, having a reduced protein content compared to a fermented milk product,

preferably yogurt, that has not been produced by any of the composition 1 to 37 such as composition 17 or 24. Preferably the reduced protein content is a reduction of at least 5%, preferably at least 10%, more preferably at least 15%, most preferably at least 20% if compared with a fermented milk product, preferably yogurt, that has not been produced by any of the composition 1 to 37 such as composition 17 or 24.

## FIGURES

**[0075]** FIG. 1 is a graph showing the shear stress at a shear rate of 215 s<sup>-1</sup> for four different lactic acid blends in yogurt of three different protein levels.

**[0076]** FIG. 2 is a graph showing the shear stress for four different lactic acid blends over the shear rate of 10 to 1000 s<sup>-1</sup> in a yogurt with 3.4% protein.

**[0077]** FIG. 3 is a graph showing the shear stress for four different lactic acid blends over the shear rate of 10 to 1000 s<sup>-1</sup> in a yogurt with 3.8% protein.

**[0078]** FIG. 4 is a graph showing the shear stress for four different lactic acid blends over the shear rate of 10 to 1000 s<sup>-1</sup> in a yogurt with 4.2% protein.

**[0079]** FIG. 5 is an overview of stirring the yogurt before measuring the shear stress.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 1. Bacterial Strains.

**[0080]**

TABLE 1

Bacterial strains		
Strain	CBS number	Strain
A	CBS134831	<i>Streptococcus thermophilus</i> DS71579
B	CBS134834	<i>Streptococcus thermophilus</i> DS71586
C	CBS134832	<i>Streptococcus thermophilus</i> DS71584
D	CBS134833	<i>Streptococcus thermophilus</i> DS71585
E	CBS134835	<i>Lactobacillus delbrueckii</i> ssp. <i>bulgaricus</i> DS71836

All strains A-E were deposited on 9 Apr. 2013 at the Centraalbureau voor Schimmelcultures (Fungal Biodiversity Centre), Uppsalalaan 8, 3584 CT Utrecht, The Netherlands under the provisions of the Budapest Treaty.

### 2. Compositions Comprising Bacterial Strains

**[0081]** The following compositions were used in the Examples. The percentages relate to the cfu's (colony forming units)—see Table 2.

TABLE 2

Compositions comprising bacterial strains - the % values relate to the cfu's of the respective strain in the composition.					
Composition	Strain A	Strain B	Strain C	Strain D	Strain E
ABCDE	24.75%	24.75%	24.75%	24.75%	1%
AE	99.0%	—	—	—	1%
BE	—	99.0%	—	—	1%
CE	—	—	99.0%	—	1%
DE	—	—	—	99.0%	1%
BDE	—	49.5%	—	49.5%	1%
BD	—	50%	—	50%	—